

Coburn Amendment 1076 - To prohibit performance awards in the Senior Executive Service during sequestration periods.

While the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) ordered a freeze on most bonuses for federal workers during sequestration, current law provides an exemption for members of the Senior Executive Service (SES), who are among the most highly-paid government employees. This legislation closes the exemption loophole to ensure both non-SES federal employees and SES employees are treated equally and do not receive bonuses during sequestration.

SES Members Should Be Treated Equally to Other Federal Employees During Sequestration Periods

From 2008 to 2011, the federal government spent more than \$340 million on cash bonuses for SES employees. Although SES employees comprise less than 1% of the federal workforce, they received more than 4% of the total amount of federal dollars spent on employee bonuses during that time period.

The value of cash awards for SES employees increased from more than \$84 million in 2008 to more than \$90 million in 2010. In 2011, following a directive from the Office of Personnel Management to limit SES bonuses to no more than 5% of aggregate salary, the value of cash awards to SES employees dropped to \$78 million.

To control spending during sequestration, OMB ordered agencies to freeze most bonus and award spending. However, SES bonuses are currently required by statute, so agencies are forced to continue giving SES bonuses while denying them to other workers – some of whom will even receive decreased salaries due to being furloughed.

This amendment would provide for equal treatment of SES employees and other federal employees during a sequestration period, at least in regards to bonus payments.